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PRINTER'S-MARK OF J. SCHOIFFER, 1522

Notes on New Books

IN taste and imagination, in the graces of style, in the arts of persuasion, in the magnificence of public works, the ancients were at least our equals said Macaulay.

I fancy this would prove somewhat disconcerting to many of those contemporary souls who, believing themselves gloriously modern, exhibit predelections that suggest affinity to the jungle. I refer now to those who hold ideas so revolutionary that their ideas are not revolutionary at all, but merely rank confusion, the reflection of which presents only distortion.

We do not need to have Tacitus tell us that mental and moral excellence requires peace and quietness. The impressive fact is imposing in its obviousness. Therefore, when the Classics are held up to scorn and condemnation, it is time to suspect a tinge of at least involuntary bolshevism in those who, declaring that the world's great minds of yesterday hold little for them, thus admit their own incapacity for that cultural expansion which could not be accomplished by a complete banishment of the ancient writers, and while thus admitting it, still persist in attempting to withdraw the priceless heritage from others.

Dryden told us that we derive all that is pardonable in us from ancient fountains and with Glanvill we may believe that the sages of old live again in us—in some

of us,—and in opinions there is a metapsychosis. If moderns cannot reach the beauties of the ancients we can, as Addison reminds us, avoid their imperfections.

Thus it is that we are shocked at the fashion which has sprung up for the demolition of those ancient fountains, the incredulity that exists as to the worth of perpetuating the wisdom of old, as though wisdom at all could be other than eternal, and the lack of common sense that would take from our youth the opportunity to study the beauties of the ancients, their faults as well, that the one might be emulated, the other avoided.

So it is that I turn with pleasure, in truth with gratitude, to each new edition of a classical writer which bears evidence of coming from competent hands. Before me are four new volumes of The Loeb Classical Library (G. P. Putnam's Sons, New York), *Clement of Alexandria*, with an English translation by G. W. Butterworth, M.A., Boddington Memorial, Fellow of the University of Leeds, *Plutarch's Lives* (Volume VII), with an English translation by Bernadotte Perrin, *Homer: The Odyssey* (Volume I), with an English translation by A. T. Murray, Professor of Greek at Stanford University, and *The Speeches of Aeschines* with an English translation by Charles Darwin Adams, Ph.D., Lawrence, Professor of Greek, in Dartmouth College.

We know little of Clement of Alexandria, but tradition makes him an Athenian, and the date of his birth cannot have been far from A. D. 150. Clement's writings make mention of more than three hundred minor writers whose works have now perished and of whom otherwise we know nothing. His large and generous mind "welcomed the true and the good wherever they might be found, confident that every ray of light proceeds from the same sun. His fearless acceptance of truth from every available source makes Clement not only important for his own times, but also interesting for the world of today."

The eighth volume of the Loeb Plutarch contains the Demosthenes, the Cicero, the Alexander, and the Caesar. None of these lives is found in the two oldest and most authoritative manuscripts—the Codex Sangermanensis and the Codex Leitenstettensis. This excellent edition of the *Lives* will be completed with the eleventh volume.

If the personality of the poet under whose name the *Odyssey* has come down to us is vague and shadowy—even the most familiar elements being drawn, perhaps, from his own portrayal of the blind bard, Demodocus—so to there has seemed to many scholars to be a like obscurity regarding the early history of the poem itself, says Professor Murray in his introduction to the first volume of Homer's *Odyssey* in the Loeb edition. The oldest manuscripts of the *Odyssey* date from the Tenth and from the Eleventh century, A. D., with papyrus fragments from between Third and the Fourth century, B. C. Professor Murray says, "Our modern text is remarkably well established—far better established than is, for example, the text of Shakespeare." This Loeb *Odyssey* commends itself in many respects, and one will expect to find it giving impetus to contemporary regard for Homer.

Pick up Professor Adams' translation of *The Speeches* of Aeschines and then, when you have read a few pages see if you can put down the book without reluctance. What a window it is looking upon the ancient world of men and manners! How startling like our own political manoeuvres were those of the Athenians of antiquity! Listen to this from Aeschines (Against Ctesiphon, 96-99):

"This is Demosthenes's personal and peculiar way of doing things. Other deceivers, when they are lying, try to speak in vague and ambiguous terms, afraid of being convicted; but Demosthenes, when he is cheating you, first adds an oath to his lie, calling down destruction on himself; and, secondly, predicting an event that he knows will never happen, he dares to tell the date of it; and he tells the names

of men, when he has never so much as seen their faces, deceiving your ears and imitating men who tell the truth. And this, indeed, is another reason why he richly deserves your hatred, that he is not only a scoundrel himself, but destroys your faith even in the signs and symbols of honesty."

"But now when he had said this he gave the clerk a resolution to read, longer than the 'Iliad,' but more empty than the speeches that he is accustomed to deliver and the life that he has led. Empty did I say? Nay, full of hopes that were not to be realized and of armies that were never to be assembled." Indeed, Aeschines is modern as well as ancient! He possessed the "art" as Professor Adams says, "of putting himself readily upon the most familiar terms with his audience; he likes to talk the matter over with them rather than to declaim to them; his only fault here is a tendency to assume something of the didactic tone of the schoolmaster."

"Envy, my friend Plato assures me," says Paul Elmer More in his preface to the tenth series of his *Shelburne Essays, With the Wits* (Houghton Mifflin Company, Boston and New York), "has no place in the chorus of celestial beings. I shall tell him, if ever I have the joy of saluting him humbly where he walks in company with Socrates and all the wise, that envy seems to have abundant place in the present halls of Academe." If this is so, I think Mr. More may well become target for those who cannot attain such delightful height as his Pegasus has brought him to in the realm of the essay, if envy, perchance, entereth their hearts at all. The essays in *With the Wits*, with the exception of the one on Lady Mary Wortley Montagu, which originally appeared in the *Atlantic Monthly*, all appeared first in the *Nation*, during Mr. More's editorship of that journal. "They were occasional in their origin," says the author, "suggested by the publication of various books, and composed with no design of forming a connected series. The title, therefore, under which they

are now gathered together should not mislead the reader into looking for what in the nature of the case he cannot find. There has been no plan to write a history of "wit," no attempt to tread the subject with philosophic unity or crudite completeness. The essays do, indeed, for the most part deal with the 'wits,' technically so called, who clustered about the court of Queen Anne and went into opposition on the coming of George the First, and so far the title of the book may be justified, but some of the greater stars of the galaxy are mating, and others are included who had their rising at an earlier or a later date." Thus Mr. More bends to a scrupulous conscience. However, there need be no apology for any lack of inclusiveness, nor will those who read those essays in their earlier form in the *Nation* and in the *Atlantic* be bored by their rereading in *With the Wits*. Indeed, many of them have been considerably enlarged above the form of their original journal publication. I will leave the reader to discover for himself Mr. More's delightful confidences about this matter in his preface, which preface is one of the most delightful of the whole delectable garden of essays here blossoming under cultivation of his gifted pen. Mr. More's position among American critics is, indeed, one of unique authority to which each succeeding volume of *Shelburne Essays* has repeated confirmation. This tenth volume brings Beaumont and Fletcher, Halifax, Mrs. Behn, Swift, Pope, Lady Mary Wortley Montagu, Bishop Berkeley, the Duke of Wharton, Thomas Gray are all brought to us in an interesting, scholarly and illuminating manner, with a concluding chapter on "Decadent Wit."

The thirty-six essays of Philip Littell's *Books and Things* (Harcourt, Brace and Howe, New York), possess a charm and clarity that gives them a welcome. Some thirty of these have appeared in *The New Republic*. The first essay is "Sargent's Wilson at the Metropolitan Museum" characterizes Sargent's portrait with "Mr. Sargent has shown us a Professor of the Future, whom a delegation from the present, the coarse present in which

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things are every day either done or undone, has interrupted. When the present has picked up its hat and bowed itself out he will be relieved to be left alone again with the future." Mr. Littell's essays are endowed with a humor that cannot fail to appeal through its felicitous application to the somberness of life when such is under consideration.

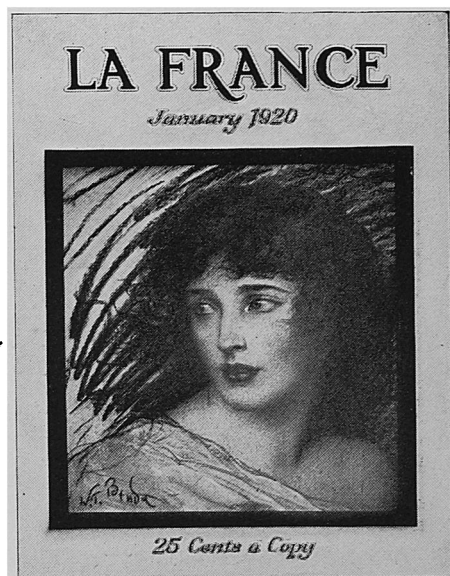
It is pleasant to pick up *Painting and the Personal Equation* by Charles H. Woodbury, N.A. (Houghton Mifflin Company, Boston and New York) and find it a work happily free from the tiresome art jargon that inflicts so many excursions in art writing. The realities behind the artistic processes and artistic appreciation are the things at which Mr. Woodbury arrives with directness, but without crudity. The three parts of the book concern themselves with The Painter, The Student and The Public. Here are a few of the things Mr. Woodbury says: "One of the characteristics of American landscape is that it has a virility we do not find in Europe. The American people are full of life and their natural expression is force. We are not slow in action, and we are quick minded. We go to extremes easily, but we are not soft—not dreamers only. The art that will come from America will be virile like the air which has the clearness of crystal." "Realism has never been more than an individual opinion held in the delusive name of truth." "Technique is clear expression of what you see or feel. The training only enables the hand to obey the mind." "It is very unsafe to think if you do not want it to appear in the picture." "Art is not based on the way things are, but upon things as you see and feel them. A picture is a description of a personal reaction. We see according as we are, and our facts vary with our perceptions." This volume is beautifully printed and well bound, one of the best made and most attractive books typographically of the year.

Great Artists and Their Works (Marshall Jones Company, Boston), is a collection by A. Mansfield Brooks of passages on art, artists and works of art by various writers, Lord Leighton, Thackeray,

Tolstoi, Whistler, Ruskin, Viollet-le-Duc, Walter Pater, Charles Eliot Norton, Henry James, Walter Crane, Goethe, John Addington Symonds, William Morris and others. One should not find fault with Mr. Brooks's omissions, since this volume does not pretend to be other than a selection and not one of inclusiveness. The hundred and seven selections are worth reading and re-reading and will, I think, add to the enjoyment of the art-lover. It is the fashion of some critics to decry such compilations but I think the intention of such books more often than not achieves their purpose.

A beautifully printed and illustrated volume, *Introductions* by Martin Birnbaum (Frederic Fairchild Sherman, New York) contains delightful essays,—delightful because interesting, illuminating and truly literary in quality at one and the same time—from the graceful pen of a well-known critic, expert and collector. The subjects of Mr. Birnbaum's *Introductions* are painters, sculptors and graphic artists,—Aubrey Beardsley, Charles Conder, Charles Ricketts and Charles Shannon, Leon Bakst, Maurice Herne, Paul Manship, Elie Nadelman, Edmund Dulac, Kay Nielson, Albert Sterner, Robert Frederick Blum, Jules Pascin, Alfred Stevens, and John Flaxman. It is, indeed, a happy thing to come upon a book so excellent in contents, so attractive in illustration and so fine typographically as Mr. Birnbaum's *Introductions*. It is an excellent example of what our American books *ought* to be in the way of paper, printing and binding.

Although not a new book, Gertrude Richardson's *The Study and Enjoyment of Pictures* (Sully and Kleinteich, New York) which has come to the reviewer's table, this volume deserves commendation. It is intended as an introduction to formal study, tracing the main currents in the history of painting, reviewing the chief schools and serving as a guide to the most noted pictures in America and Europe. Such a book ought to help to lead the person who is fond of remarking, "I know what I like" to a knowledge that will enable him to add, "and I know *why* I like it."



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